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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [TRGY](#) [KNNP](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: QATARI MFA OFFICIAL SAYS NUCLEAR AIMS OF GCC ARE
TRANSPARENT

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Michael A. Ratney,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) MFA Director for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Affairs Yousef Al-Jaber outlined for P/E Chief January 24 current GCC thinking on the introduction of nuclear technology in Gulf states. According to Al-Jaber, the GCC formed a nuclear committee in early 2007 to explore cooperation on the acquisition and exploitation of nuclear technologies in GCC states for peaceful purposes. Since this initiative was undertaken, the committee has held three meetings and scheduled a fourth for January 27-29 in Doha. Al-Jaber stressed that members of the committee had met with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna and would continue to work in close cooperation with the IAEA, since the GCC states sought full transparency in their quest for peaceful uses of nuclear technology. He added that the GCC committee was not partaking in discussions with parties or countries other than the IAEA on this issue.

¶2. (C) Al-Jaber explained that Qatar and its fellow GCC members were looking to nuclear energy as a replacement for hydrocarbons. According to him, the GCC hoped to establish nuclear plants to help fulfill its member states' electrical and water needs in the 2018-2025 time frame pending IAEA input on the feasibility of this timetable. Al-Jaber acknowledged that the UAE was farther down the road to nuclear power than the other states. While he could not speak for other GCC states, Al-Jaber said Qatar intended to cooperate with the GCC in developing nuclear technologies. Of course, said Al-Jaber, the GCC states would proceed at different paces and could be expected, as the UAE has done with France, to strike deals outside the GCC framework when it suited their interest of obtaining the most assistance possible at the lowest price.

¶3. (C) For the time being, said Al-Jaber, the GCC states were approaching the IAEA in concert for guidance on specialists who could prepare a feasibility study and recommend a realistic time frame for building nuclear plants for a post-hydrocarbon world. The members of the GCC nuclear committee were charged with updating the GCC foreign ministers every three months, and the heads of state every six months, on their progress. Al-Jaber said the committee expects the UAE to report at the upcoming meeting on its recent discussions with French officials. Asked for GCC views on the need to develop local expertise in the nuclear field, Al-Jaber described the need as acute, in the view of GCC leaders. This explained, he said, why the timeline for establishing nuclear plants exceeded a decade, since it was desirable to educate indigenous nuclear physicists and engineers in the interim period. It was important, concluded Al-Jaber, that GCC states develop nuclear know-how so that their citizens may participate fully in the sector and not leave all the work to foreigners.

RATNEY